

THE STORY OF THE 49 ½ ers

By George Putnam

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"Now and then my wife pulls off meetings at our home. The other day I strayed in to find some twenty-nine women pilots in possession, all members of the Ninety-Nine Club. (By the way, if you want to make the feathers fly just call 'em Lady Birds).

A while ago some of the husbands of members of this Ninety-Nine Club got together to see what could be done about it. Our intention was not so much to combat its activities as to establish a machinery for masculine self-protection.

Out of that meeting emerged the Forty-Nine Point Five Club (49.5) - reckoned arithmetically as fifty per cent of our better halves. The prime movers were Herb Thaden, Bill Marsalis, and myself. Their wives, Louise and Frances, recently distinguished themselves by staying aloft in a plane eight days, breaking the women's endurance record, not to mention the official time of Creation. With their better halves aloft in their flying boudoir, Herb and Bill endured on the ground. Herb, I believe, playing nursemaid to two-year-old Herb. Jr., and Bill learning lots about what a can opener can do in the kitchen.

Well, right up at the top of our new organization's program is the 49.5 endurance prize for 1933. The handsome trophy .. the design contemplates crossed silver safety pins mounted on a cut-glass milk bottle ...will go to the licensed pilot who stays at home the longest time. We hope the presentations will be featured at next year's National Air Races at Cleveland. The plan is to have it handed out by Jim Haizlip, even though he is eligible, because his wife Mae, just set a new woman's speed record with 255 miles an hour."